REMARKS

In response to the final Office Action mailed January 10, 2008, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. For the reasons set forth below, the application as presented is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-9 were previously pending. No claims have been added, cancelled or amended. Accordingly, claims 1-9 stand pending, of which claims 1 and 7 are in independent form.

Traversal of Finality of Office Action

The current Office Action rejects claims 1-9 over two new references not previously of record or disclosed in an IDS submitted by Applicant. The current Office Action was made final. Applicant respectfully traverses the finality of this Office Action and requests that the finality of the Office Action be withdrawn.

As stated in the MPEP at § 706.07(a), "Under present practice, second or any subsequent actions on the merits shall be final, **except where the examiner introduces a new ground of rejection that is neither necessitated by applicant's amendment of the claims, nor based on information submitted in an information disclosure statement** filed during the period set forth in 37 CFR 1.97(c) with the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p)." (emphasis added).

On page 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that "[a]pplicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action." However, in Applicant's previous Amendment and Response, filed on October 17, 2007, each of claims 1-9 had been amended to overcome the Examiner's informality objections (i.e., the inclusion of reference numbers in the claim language) and to further clarify the claimed invention by rewriting limitations in a more idiomatic manner. No new claims were added and no substantive changes were made to any of the claims that would have necessitated a new ground of rejection. Moreover, since only dependent claim 6 was rejected for lacking clarity, it would appear that all other claims as originally presented were clear and definite. Because the Applicant did no more than recast limitations already present in claims that were understood by the Examiner and Applicant's amendment of the claims did not necessitate a new search or a new ground of rejection, withdrawal of the finality of the current Office Action is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0169886 to Saito et al. (hereinafter "Saito") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5, 666,363 to Osakabe et al. (hereinafter "Osakabe"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Disclosure of Saito

Saito discloses a data exchange method between nodes and a network (Saito at paragraph 0016). A master node (Echonet controller 1) periodically sends an inquiry to detect the presence of a new device that is attempting to join the network (Saito at paragraph 0063). The new device responds so that the master device can give it a proper address according to the data exchange protocol used (Saito at paragraphs 0058, 0074-0075). In regular data exchange operation, when a slave device A wants to transmit a frame to a slave device B, the slave device A transmits the frame to the master device, the frame including the destination address of the slave device B (Saito at paragraph 0098).

The Disclosure of Osakabe

Osakabe discloses a method of exchanging data between devices such as television TV 10, video tape recorders VTR20, 30 and video disk player VDP 40 (Osakabe Col. 1, lines 7-14). Frames are transmitted on a bidirectional bus 1 according to a carrier sense multiple access with collision detection (CSMA/CD) technique (Osakabe Col. 8, lines 42-48). A frame contains a master address field 52 for designating the address of an originating device and a slave address field 53 for designating a destination device (Osakabe Col. 9, lines 6-12 and FIG. 9). A frame can be transmitted from a sub-device enclosed in a device to another device, from a device to a sub-device enclosed in another device, or from a device to another device (Osakabe Col. 10, lines 19-29).

The Office Action Fails to Establish a *Prima Facie* Case of Obviousness over Saito in view of Osakabe

According to § 706.02(j) of the MPEP:

> To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

The Office Action fails to meet at least two of these three criteria. The Office Action's asserted suggestion or motivation to combine Osakabe with Saito is refuted by Saito itself. Further, any combination of Saito and Osakabe would not disclose, teach, or suggest all the claim limitations of any of claims 1-9.

On page 4, the Office Action asserts that the motivation to combine Saito and Osakabe would be "in order for bi-direction communication between devices." However, both Saito and Osakabe are directed to systems utilizing bi-directional communication protocols. One of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine Osakabe with Saito for the reason asserted because the communication protocols described in Saito, such as Bluetooth and IP **are already bi-directional communication protocols** (Saito at paragraph 0002). Accordingly, the Office Action fails to provide a proper basis as to why one of ordinary skill in the art would combine these references.

Moreover, even if one combined the teachings of Saito and Osakabe (for the reason asserted, or for any other reason) the combination would not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the limitations in Applicant's claims.

Claims 1-9 Patently Distinguish Over Saito in View of Osakabe

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method for exchanging information frames over a network between a plurality of devices. Each device of the plurality of devices comprises a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and also comprises a plurality of addresses. Each address is associated with one of a transmission indicator or a reception indicator. Each

address is associated with a memory containing an information frame that can be at least one of modified and read by the processing unit. Only a single device of the plurality of devices includes one of the plurality of addresses that is associated with the transmission indicator. The method comprises the steps of having a master device periodically transmit an address of the plurality of addresses, and responsive to transmission of the address by the master device, having the communication circuit of the device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the transmission indicator transmit the information frame contained in the memory associated with the address and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address, and having the communication circuit of each device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the reception indicator write into the memory associated with the address the information frame and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address.

No reasonable combination of Saito and Osakabe could disclose, teach, or suggest the method recited in independent claim 1 because the references, alone and in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or suggest all the limitations of independent claim 1.

On page 2, the Office Action asserts that "Saito teaches a method for exchanging information frames over a network between a plurality of devices, each device of the plurality of devices comprising a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and comprising a plurality of addresses." However, in Saito, only the master device (Echonet controller 1) contains an address table 123 (e.g. a plurality of addresses), as shown in Saito FIG. 3. Nowhere does Saito disclose or suggest that the slave devices (Echonet Device A, B, and C) include an address table. Indeed, Saito discloses that address mapping is carried out by the Echonet controller 1, not by any slave device (Saito at paragraphs 0058 and 0061). Thus, Saito fails to disclose "a method for exchanging information frames over a network between a plurality of devices, [wherein] **each device of the plurality of devices compris[es] a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and comprising a plurality of addresses.**" (emphasis added). Further, the address table of the master device appears to simply be a correlation table between Bluetooth addresses, slave identifiers, and Echonet addresses for devices on the network. There is no disclosure in Saito that each address is associated with one of a transmission indicator or a reception indicator, wherein each address is associated with a

memory containing an information frame that can be at least one of modified and read by the processing unit as recited in independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to specifically point out where he finds support for the disclosure of these elements in Saito or withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1 based thereon.

On page 3, the Office Action asserts that Saito's master device periodically transmits an address of the plurality of addresses. However, Saito discloses in paragraph 0063 that "[t]he Echonet controller 1 periodically sends an inquiry to the surrounding." There is no disclosure that this "inquiry" is an address of a plurality of addresses associated with a transmission indicator and included in a device on the network as recited in independent claim 1.

On page 3, the Office Action concedes that Saito does not teach "having the communication circuit of the device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the transmission indicator transmit the information frame contained in the memory associated with the address and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address; and having the communication circuit of each device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the reception indicator write into the memory associated with the address the information frame and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address."

However, contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, nothing in Osakabe teaches these limitations of independent claim 1 either. On page 3, the Office Action asserts that Osakabe teaches having the communications circuit of the device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the transmission indicator transmit the information frame contained in the memory associated with the address and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address. However, the section of Osakabe cited as supporting this proposition (Osakabe at Col. 2, lines 20-65) makes no mention of any information frame contained in memory and associated with an address transmitted by a master device, of any address associated with a transmission indicator, or of providing a processing unit with an identifier of the address. While the Office Action concedes that these elements are not disclosed in Saito, these elements are not disclosed in Osakabe either. Indeed, a keyword search of the text of Osakabe obtained from the USPTO website reveals that the terms "transmission indicator" and "identifier" do not even exist in that patent. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to

specifically point out where he finds support for the disclosure of these elements in Osakabe or withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1 based thereon.

On pages 3-4, the Office Action asserts that Osakabe further teaches "having the communication circuit of each device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with the reception indicator write into the memory associated with the address of the information frame and provide its processing unit with an identifier of the address." However, the portion of Osakabe cited for this proposition (Col. 9, line 5 – Col. 10, line 34) is directed to what Osakabe regards as his invention while the section of Osakabe cited just previously (Col. 2, lines 20-65) is directed to what Osakabe considers prior art (Osakabe at Col. 3, line 66 – Col. 4, line 28). As a whole, Osakabe clearly teaches away from the prior art disclosed in Osakabe, which Osakabe asserts increases traffic while lowering transmission frequency (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 11-12), has a complex communication protocol (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 12-13), requires a prolonged time for the bidirectional bus to become cleared (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 19-21), requires complex processing hardware (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 25-26), and is subject to confusing a request frame with a command frame (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 27-28). Osakabe asserts that his invention overcomes these problems of the disclosed prior art (Osakabe at Col. 4, lines 32-39). Clearly, as a whole, Osakabe teaches away from the combination asserted in the Office Action.

More importantly, Col. 9, line 5 – Col. 10, line 34 of Osakabe utterly fail to teach what the Office Action asserts. In the cited section of Osakabe, there is absolutely no mention of any communication circuit of a device for which the address transmitted by the master device is associated with a reception indicator, of a device writing into memory associated with an address an information frame, or of a device which provides its processing unit an identifier of the address responsive to the transmission of the address by a master device. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to specifically point out where he finds support for the disclosure of these elements in Osakabe or withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1 based thereon.

In summary, neither Saito nor Osakabe, alone or in combination, teaches, discloses, or suggests **all** of the limitations of independent claim 1. Thus, for each of the reasons described in detail above, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of

independent claim 1 over Saito in view of Osakabe. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe is respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 2-6 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1 and are patentable over Saito in view of Osakabe for at least similar reasons as independent claim 1. Accordingly withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 2-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 7 is directed to a device that can be connected to a network. The device comprises a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and including an address table, a register table, and a direction table. Each register in the register table is associated with an address in the address table. The direction table comprises one direction indicator per address. The processing unit is capable of reading information frames stored into the registers or writing information frames in the registers. The communication circuit is capable, upon reception of a request received from the network and corresponding to one of said addresses, of transmitting over the network the information frame stored in the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a first determined type, of writing an information frame received from the network into the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and of transmitting to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address.

The Office Action also fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of independent claim 7 over Saito in view of Osakabe. As discussed above, the Office Action's asserted basis for the combination of Saito and Osakabe is refuted by the references themselves. Further, no combination of Saito and Osakabe discloses, teaches, or suggests each and every limitation of independent claim 7 because neither reference, alone or in combination, discloses all the limitations of independent claim 7.

On page 6, the Office Action asserts that Saito teaches in FIG. 2 "a device that can be connected to a network comprising a communication circuit connected to a processing unit and including an address table, a register table, and each register in the register table being associated with an address in the address table." However, as discussed above, Saito's address table 123

disclosed in FIG. 2 and FIG. 3 appears to simply be a correlation table between Bluetooth addresses, slave identifiers, and Echonet addresses for devices on a network. Neither the address table nor any other component of the Echonet processing unit 12 illustrated in FIG. 2 contains a register table, let alone a register table where each register in the register table is associated with an address in the address table as recited in independent claim 7.

On page 3, the Office Action concedes that Saito does not teach "the direction table comprising one direction indicator per address, said processing unit being capable of reading information frames stored into the registers or writing information frames in the registers, said communication circuit being capable, upon reception of a request received from the network and corresponding to one of said addresses, of transmitting over the network the information frame stored in the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a first determined type, of writing an information frame received from the network into the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and of transmitting to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address."

However, contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, nothing in Osakabe teaches these limitations of independent claim 7 either.

The section of Osakabe cited as purportedly teaching these elements (FIGS. 1-11 and Col. 9, line 5 – Col. 10, line 34) makes absolutely no mention of any direction table, let alone a direction table comprising one direction indicator per address, nor any processing unit capable of reading information frames stored into registers or writing information frames into registers, nor any communication circuit capable, upon reception of a request received from the network and corresponding to one of said addresses, of transmitting over the network the information frame stored in the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a first determined type, of writing an information frame received from the network into the register associated with said address in response to the corresponding direction indicator being a second determined type, and of transmitting to said processing unit an identifier of the register associated with said address. Nothing else is Osakabe teaches these elements of independent claim 7 either.

Indeed, a keyword search of the text of Osakabe obtained from the USPTO website reveals that the terms "direction table," "direction indicator," or "identifier" do not even exist in Osakabe. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to specifically point out where he finds support for the disclosure of these elements in Osakabe or withdraw the rejection of independent claim 7 based thereon.

Thus, because the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of independent claim 7, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe is respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 8 and 9 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 7 and patently distinguish over Saito in view of Osakabe for at least the same reasons as independent claim 7. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Saito in view of Osakabe is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Final Office Action mailed January 10, 2008 is respectfully requested. This application should now be in condition for allowance; a notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50/2762.

Respectfully submitted,

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